

Amendments To The Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 13 with the following amended paragraph:

A common type of interior trim panel **2** (**FIG. 4**) or cover **20** used to cover and hide the air bag **40** (**FIG. 5**) in a motor vehicle may comprise a thin elastic plastic outer skin **22** having a non-glaring grained outer surface, a rigid retainer or substrate **26** and an intermediate layer of soft plastic foam **24** between the skin and substrate. In some cases the foam is omitted.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 17 with the following amended paragraph:

It is common practice to use vinyl, typically polyvinyl chloride (PVC), to form the thin plastic outer shell or skin **22** for the panel **2**. The skin material may also comprise urethanes (e.g., PU), olefins (e.g., PP, PS, TPO, ETP-TPO), esters (e.g., COPE), styrenes (e.g., AAS, ASA) and rubbers (e.g. TPO, ETP-TPO, ABS) in various compositions.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 21 with the following amended paragraph:

The present invention relates to those trim panels **2** or covers **20** wherein the skin **22** is formed of a thermoplastic polymer or thermosetting resin and is provided with an invisible tear seam **30**, and the substrate **26** includes one or more doors **29** that are impacted by the inflating air bag and press against the cover to

separate the tear seam 30 and then swing outward to form an opening in the cover 20 for deployment of the air bag 40 into a protective position in the passenger space. These tear seams 30 are provided in various configurations or patterns with the most common having a C, H, U, or X-shape and wherein the pattern determines the number of doors required in the substrate.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 4 with the following amended paragraph:

To develop tearing and/or breaking, air bag doors 29 that are integrally formed with automotive trim or instrument panels 2 will sometimes include regions of weakened materials, reduced thickness or scoring, all of which are commonly referred to as "tear seams" 30. Tear seams are weakened areas designed to preferentially tear and/or break when an air bag inflates and forces the doors to open.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 9 with the following amended paragraph:

It is desirable that the tear seams 30 and thereby the presence of the air bag 40 be hidden from view for various reasons and heretofore, this has been accomplished in several different ways. Such a tear seam is commonly referred to as an "invisible tear seam". One way of providing such an invisible tear seam 30 is by forming a tear seam defining groove 32 or series of depressions in the backside of the skin. This leaves a thin and thereby weakened section at the outer

or appearance side of the skin that defines the tear seam 30 without outwardly revealing its presence during normal view by an ordinary vehicle occupant. Examples of such invisible air bag cover tear seams are disclosed in United States Patent Nos. 5,072,967; 5,082,310; 5,316,822; 5,348,339; 5,632,914; 5,863,064 and 5,961,143.

Please insert the following new paragraphs beginning at page 4, line 18:

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of an exemplary instrument panel having a hidden airbag system.

FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view of **FIG. 4** taken along lines **5-5**.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 20 with the following amended paragraph:

FIG. 1 illustrates a side view of the preferred ultrasonic blade that can be used in accordance with the present invention. However, it should be appreciated that in broad context, any blade that operates to provide the V-shaped groove 32 described herein is contemplated.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 9 with the following rewritten paragraph:

It has been found that the above referenced double angle V-shaped design minimizes the weakening line visibility produced therefrom, enhances deployability, while preventing blocking of the skin material 22. In other words,

the skin material is not prone to heal to itself after the cutting operation, by virtue of the double angle configuration.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 14 with the following rewritten paragraph:

Preferably, the skin material 22 comprises a thermoplastic polymer, such as poly(vinyl chloride) or polyurethane, thermoplastic elastomers, thermoplastic olefins, and other skin materials utilized for vehicle interiors. Preferably the blade has a flat front edge (**14**) as shown in **FIG. 1** which also indicates generally the path of knife travel.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 18 with the following amended paragraph:

Preferably the groove 32 is 0.045" wide at the top with 0.020"- 0.028" of material at the bottom thereof.